DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 924 PS 012 021

AUTHOR Wardle, Francis
TITLE Child Development and Education of Children, Age 0 to 8 in Communities of the Society of Brothers.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Child Rearing; Children; *Collective Settlements; Community Characteristics; *Educational Practices; Elementary Education; Instructional Materials; Prenatal Influences; Preschool Education; *Religious Cultural Groups; *Social Environment
IDENTIFIERS Froebel (Friedrich); *Society of Brothers

ABSTRACT

The infant, early childhood and early school programs of the religious communal organization called the Society of Brothers are described in relationship to the basic beliefs of the Society, and to the fact that most of the children in these programs will remain in a Society community after childhood. Begun in 1920 as a reaction to a world that produced World War I, the Society of Brothers now has three communities in the United States and one in England. Since its inception, communal ownership, adherence to certain religious values, and the care of young children have been important aspects of this communal society. A child first enters the Children's House at age 6 weeks for a few hours each day. As the child grows older he or she spends more time, including Saturday and Sunday morning, in the Children's House. At 8th grade level the children attend the local public schools. Characteristics of educational programs from the first through the fourth grade level are described in detail while programs beyond the fourth grade level are briefly outlined. Also described are characteristics of the community, general attitudes toward children, and conditions favoring healthy prenatal development. In conclusion, an attempt is made to compare children who grew up in communities of the Society of Brothers to non-community children. (Author/RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Francis Wardle
3507 Jefferson St.
Kansas City,
Mo. 64111

ED198924

ABSTRACT:

Child Development and Education of Children, Age 0 to 8 in Communities of the Society of Brothers.

This paper examines the infant, early childhood and early school programs of the religious communal organization called the Society of Brothers.

Begun in 1920 as a reaction to a world that produced WW1, the Society of Brothers now has 3 communities in the United States, and one in England. Since its inception communal ownership, adherence to certain religious values, and the care of young children have been important aspects of this communal society.

A child first enters the Children's House at age 6 weeks for a few hours each day. Progressively the child spends more time in the Children's House, including Saturday and Sunday morning. The community provides schooling through 8th grade, at which time the children attend the local public schools.

This paper examines the child programs in relationship to the basic beliefs of the Society, and the fact that most of the children will remain in a community after childhood. An attempt is also made to compare children who grow up in communities of the Society of Brothers to non community children. The author spent the first 22 years of his life in communities of the Society of Brothers.

PS 012021

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Francis Wardle

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Francis Wardle
3507 Jefferson St.
Kansas City,
Mo. 64111

Child Development and Education of Children, Age 0 to 8, in Communities of The Society of Brothers.

by

Francis Wardle

The Society of Brothers started in 1920 in Germany as an outgrowth of an active youth movement that produced the kibbutz concept, the Blaue Blume and Wander Vogel movements (Wardle, 1974). Members of this youth movement were searching for ideals, life styles and beliefs that would produce a society where war was not one of its products (or byproducts). A small group gathered with Eberhard Arnold, his wife Emmy, and her sister to begin a new life of brotherly love and justice (Society of Brothers, 1975).

From that small start during the aftermath of WWI the community has grown to a total population of 1200 people, with 3 communities in the USA, and one in Sussex, England (Wardle, 1974).

The Bruderhof (Bruder in German means brother, hof means village or community) is based on strong beliefs - Anabaptist, New Testament, George Fox, the Early Christians, and the Hutterite communal tradition (Wardle, 1974). Central to the values of the community's original philosophy are children, their development and their education.

Papers, studies and books have been written about early childhood programs in the kibbutz (Bettelheim, 1969, Spiro, 1958, and Diamond, 1959) in modern communes, and Soviet collective child care centers (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). This paper is an attempt to examine the early childhood practices of a successful, intentional religious

PS 01021

community that has had the welfare of children as a central concern since its begining in 1920. The Society of Brothers is more than 50 years old, and therefore a large percentage of the adults in the community today are second generation - some third. Thus some tentative evaluation about the effect of the Society's programs can be made (Wardle, 1974).

This author believes that it's valuable to examine the programs of this society and to suggest they are different from other communal child rearing practices for several reasons. These include the central nature of the child in the value system of the society, the emphasis placed on the complete education of the community's children (as different from the Amish and Hutterites), the total communal nature of the society, and the length of its history.

This paper will center on the programs that affect children age 0 to 8 years old. However it will also have to examine the total environment that effects the child, and look beyond age eight - to show both the continuation of the education system, and its effectiveness.

Central to the importance of the child in the communities is the religious values and beliefs that structure these societies. The intention of this paper is not to evaluate religious education; but it will be examined in its relationship to the development of children in communities of the Bruderhof. It is one significant factor that makes the community programs different from those of the kibbutz.

General Structure of a Bruderhof.

A full-size community contains from 250 to 350 people of different economic and social backgrounds, from laborers to doctors

(Wardle, 1974). Some of these members are second or third generation community people, others have joined during the history of the community. Conscientious objectors, political activists, religious idealists and counter culture members have all joined.

> The individual family is the basic unit of the community, and each family has an apartment with cooking facilities. Two or three families share a refrigerator and an area for washing dishes. Apartments have no TV; radios are few, as are record players. All meals except breakfast and two family suppers a week are held communally in a large dining room. Children below school age do not come to these meals. All members of the community work within the community.(Wardle, 1974,p361)

All money, property, land, industry, cars and food are owned by the entire community. All positions within the community are considered of equal value or status (Wardle, 1974).

The three communities in the USA and the one in England are considered part of the same whole. Money, people, ideas, doctors etc. are exchanged between each hof as they are needed. Whole families often move.

Each community is located in a rural area. Older buildings (already built when the land was purchased) and newer ones designed and constructed by the community are scattered around a central meeting place. Acres of woodland provide nature activities for the children, and gardens and fields provide some food needs for each community.

Buildings found on each community include the dining room (seating up to 500) - for meals, meetings, celebrations; the children's house, school, laundry, kitchen, store, offices, maintenance center and shop (factory). Some of these areas may be in the same building.

Although each community grows crops and vegetables they do not

grow enough to provide for the total needs of the community. This is purchased, along with cars, materials, medical supplies and other items, with money earned from the production of Community Playthings - wooden toys and educational equipment. All 4 hofs manufacture these products. The communities are self sufficient in earning enough income to provide for their total needs. (Originally farming was considered the most 'natural' and consistent form of providing for the community, but that concept was abandoned).

Communal Nature of the Community.

As a logical outgrowth of the religious beliefs of community members, everyone lives together and shares everything. As Eberhard Arnold wrote in 1927:

> An inescapable "must" is what makes us live in community, work in community, and let life in community determine everything we do and think. ...we have been overwhelmed by a certainty...All life created by God exists in a communal form and works toward community. Therefore we have to live in community(p1).

In a practical sense this communal sharing exists in many ways. No one owns any property, large decisions are made communally, and tasks, joys and sorrows are shared.

The store keeper takes care of the individual family food needs, and providing food for the communal meals. The 'housemothers' provide clothes, shoes and other basics. These are often distributed through individual birthdays and other celebrations. A steward is responsible for money matters and expenditures. He also supervises the community's fleet of vehicles.

All members of the community work within their community. A work distributer assigns job positions according to skills and experience, work needed to be done, and whether the community wishes the individual in that particular position.

Several times a week all members of a community meet to collect-

ively discuss problems, celebrate, and make unanimous decisions about community affairs. At these meetings persons are also selected to head the various departments. Communal decision making does not exhibit itself in cumbersome debates on small issues: deligated persons have considerable authority, and issues that produce conflict at meetings are dropped until everyone can agree.

Only members attend these meetings and have imput into the decisions. A member is an individaul (who either grew up in the community or joined from 'outside') who successfully completed the process of joining the brotherhood. This involves a novitiate period and baptism.

Progress and the Community.

The Society of Brothers is a strange combination of the traditional Amish, the sophisticated Hutterite farmer and modern technological progress. Technological advancements are adopted only when they futher the basic goals of the community - telephones, woodwork machinery etc.

Position of the Child in the Community.

> When a child is born the whole community of over 300 people enjoys the fact that a tiny little baby is given - a mystery that man cannot create or do, something God gives. And usually on the day when mother and baby arrive home from hospital, the whole community goes that evening and sings to father, mother and baby. (Arnold, H., & Arnold, A., 1974, p21)

Children are extremely important in the physical and spiritual makeup of the community. Their birth represents God's power and love; their simple childlike nature symbolizes the faith, commitment and simple joy of a true Christian. The children are considered an integral part of the community. "..the education of the children was and is the central part of a brotherly life." (Arnold, E. 1976, p1).

> So we concern ourselves in a special way with children, because they are not yet bound to the powers of evil to such an extent as grown ups; for good powers lie latent in a child, waiting to be awakened. (Arnold, E., 1976, p2)

Education is considered a vital function of the community. "A living education belongs in the midst of a living Church community. Therefore the children's community is part of the adult's community of faith, where people live in spirit of true brotherhood and service." (Arnold, E., 1976, p18). " From time to time the children - especially the older ones – should eat with the grownups; these mealtimes will be devoted completely to children... ....we should find ways that will allow the Brotherhood and the rest of the community to maintain a deep and living contact with the children's community." (Arnold, E., 1976, p18)

For the remainder of this paper I wish to follow the child's progression - from before birth to fourth grade. As I do so I will examine the institutional, family and community settings that makeup the child's environment. I will also examine the child's later status vis â vis high school, college and intergration into the society (Society of Brothers).

The Child Before Birth.

Several researchers have reported on the effects of the mother's alchoholic consumption on the developing fetus. (Jones, Smith et al, 1974, as cited in Annis, 1978). They have shown the effect of fetal alchohol syndrome in children of drinking mothers. Even moderate drinking by mothers during the begining stages of pregnancy can result in damage of the child. (Hanson and Oulette, 1977, as cited in Annis, 1978).

Similarly research on cigarette smoking also suggest a correlation between mothers who smoke and problems for the fetus. The National Children's Bureau of Britain (1973, as cited in Annis, 1978) has now found that babies of women who smoke during pregnancy have a greater chance of dying soon after birth and having long term effects than children from non smoking mothers.

Members of the community very rarely smoke - women almost never. Very little alchoholic beverage of any kind in consumed by members of the community - and again less is drunk by women.

Rabin (1965, as cited in Annis, 1978) and other researchers suggest that motivation of parents may set the tone for future parent-child relations long before the child is conceived, and that women dissatisfied with their social status or who are emotionally unstable are more anxious and emotionally malajusted during pregnancy. Sontag (1941, 1944, 1966, as cited in Annis, 1978) indicates this maternal stress can produce smaller offspring whose viability, activity, anxiety levels and larning abilities are affected.

Although it would be difficult to determine the individual motivation of mothers in the community, it is clear from the position of the child in the community, the symbolic relationship of the child to Christian renewal, childlikeness and the grace of God, that the collective motivation for children in the community is very high. "We will realize that any community whose members serve one another in love as brothers and sisters, the children must come first."(Arnold, E., 1976)

By the same reasoning it would be difficult to show that mothers in the community are under no emotional stress. However typically stressful situations that many mothers face are not present

in women who live in one of the communities. Because of the communal responsibility towards money, food, jobs, medical security, day care and emotional needs, the mother is not concerned with worries in those areas. Adult helpers are even provided to help the mothers with her younger children during the latter period of pregnancy.

It could also be argued that because divorce is not an acceptable option in the community, and because male-female roles are very clearly defined, there would be less emotional stress in these areas.

Finally, other substances and environmental situations that might negatively effect the pregnant mother are minimized. Drugs are not consumed, and medical attention is regular, professional and non threatening. Diets are also prescribed and provided by the communal kitchen.

The Baby.

A baby in communities of the Society of Brothers is usually delivered in the local hospital. (In Paraguay and early in England this was not so. Wardle 1979a). "When the baby is six weeks old the mother begins to take part again in the communal work; she goes to the baby house (children's house) during daytime hours when the baby is nursed so that she can fulfill her motherly vocation with the child (Arnold, H and A, 1974, p21).

During the hours of the day while the mother takes part in the community work, babies and small children up to 4 years old are very lovingly cared for in the children's house. (Arnold, H. and A, 1974). All children from 6 weeks old to 4 years old stay in the children's house.

This house is in a central location, is surrounded by grass, has hardtop play areas, and is away from busy roads..The rooms are brightly painted, each in a different color - red, blue, yellow; there is plenty of window light and flourescent light; and the floors are tile. All rooms are well equipped with developmental materials - mobiles above babies' cots, blocks and wheeled toys in the older youngster's rooms, original pictures and group photographs on the walls. Books and puzzles abound. The children's house also contains a sick room, a small kitchen where food for the babies is prepared. Food for most of the children is brought from the main kitchen.....

The baby will begin by spending a few hours each day in the children's house, the time increasing until the child remains from 9 am until 5 pm, with a break from 2 to 3, when the baby goes home. On Sunday the child stays from 10 to 3pm.(Wardle, 1974, p362)

Some of the people who look after the babies have formal training in early childhood and infant education. Many are mothers who have raised children of their own. Because children have an important place in community life, working in the children's house is considered an important job.

It is important to remember that people are not paid or rewarded materially for jobs in the community. So they can 'afford' to have mature, well educated and motivated people working with the children. The women who work with the young children genuinely love them and take their responsibility seriously. "We feel a deep response to this since we know each new life is a gift from God entrusted to us as parents. A baby is born knowing only the need of love and food, innocent of fear and hate, untarnished by the world. In our care of the young child we carry the responsibility to show him only love." (Shirky and Zimmerman, 1975, p27).

"I think that what children acquire in the first two years is the first set of social skills and attitudes they will begin to use with people - with other family members, and with other children in true peer relations....He will learn, albeit imperfectly, whether she (caregiver) is the kind of person who gives him undivided attention

or devided attention." (White, B., 1975, p11). So the primary caregivers are very important.

Initially babies are placed in their own cribs in the children's house. But soon they spend some of their active awake period in areas with other children. "Even our youngest spend most of the day in a group with others their own age, and we have the unique opportunity to see the joy and response of the young baby to another baby. Babies 3 to 4 months old will lie in their cribs smiling at each other; and soon after, when put on the floor together, will respond to each other." (Shirky and Zimmerman, 1975, p27).

The children receive social, visual and other sensory stimulation from the other children in the baby rooms, and from the baby's caregiver. Because of the international makeup of the community the babies are immediately exposed to accents and styles of considerable variety. The first experience on the floor with the other children is the begining of the communal nature of education in the communities of the Society of Brothers. More and more the child will be placed in groups, and will be expected to be unselfish and fit in with the others.

When the baby is not at the children's house - evenings, midday and Sunday afternoon - he is an active member of the family. During these hours he gets undivided attention from his siblings and parents. Family time and family experiences are considered very important. When people visit other people socially the entire family usually is invited.

<u>One to Four Years.</u>

"The age of one year to two years is a tumultuous time. The child cannot articulate his desires....We provide a supervision ratio of one teacher to 5 children, and physical activity that affords outlets for energy." (Shirky and Zimmerman, 1975, p24).

"They enter very much into the seasons of the year and many joyful activities of the community - lantern festivals, Christmas, winter activities, Easter and the coming of spring, new babies, new families, and our ponies. They feel more and more a part of the whole life and show it by their eagerness and trusting response." (Shirky and Zimmerman, 1975, p26)

The children are becoming more mobile. They spend a great deal of time outside. Groups of children can be seen visiting the garden, going for walks in the woods, or visiting their fathers at snack time at the factory. Even cold days will find the children all bundled up and riding (pony cart) or walking about the Bruderhof.

The fenced in area outside the children's house has many activities for the children - the outdoor play equipment made by the children's fathers, sand boxes, swings and trees.

Indoor activities include singing, simple dramatic productions, and a whole wealth of art/craft projects. Story telling is popular, as is playing with the simple solid wooden toys - trucks, doll houses, blocks, cooking corners etc. There is a balance of group activities - singing, circle games, reading etc., and individual activities - playing in the sand box, with the wheeled toys, or with another child. But children are expected to be able to play together - share, not argue, and cooperate.

The children's house philosophy is very much influenced by Froebel (many teachers were trained at the Froebel Institute in Germany). There is also a strong direction <u>not</u> to expose children to specifically academic ideas - letters, reading, numbers etc. at this age. A strong emphasis is placed on the enjoyment of nature and the love of God.

> Every real child lives in and with nature. Wherever he looks, the living soul of nature is immediately obvious to him. It is not hard for the educator to show the sensitive child the creative power at work everywhere, to point out the relationship of unity in nature. (Arnold,E1976, p39, 40).

"Children do not find God as nature itself, nor in nature. They find him above and behind the whole of nature, behind the entire creation - never in any one part of creation." (Arnold, E., 1976, p40). This concept is later included in the formal studies in the way of science, nature studies, conservation, bird identification, etc.

The greater community's joy and involvement with the newborn infant is continued as he grows older. Pictures made in the children's house hang in the shop snack room, in hallways and gathering places. Dramatic presentations, simple songs and dances are given by children at weddings, celebrations and festivals. Each Sunday morning is the Children's Meeting. At this meeting the entire community gathers to share the joy of the children. Songs are sung, a simple story might be told, birthdays are ~~acknowledged~~ celebrated. Children, families, old people, and single people meet together like a big family.

Kindergarten Years.

The 2 years (age 4 to 6) before school are known as kindergarten. Broken down futher, the first year is kindergarten, the next preschool (following the German tradition).

"....there came afresh the realization of how delicate a thing it was to help them make the transition from comparative babyhood into the ever increasing responsibility and sensitivity to the world around them." (Clement, J., 1975, p46).

> The next two years of Kindergarten, before they enter the grades, are busy ones for the children. There are so many familiar struggles to be continued. A listening ear, a trusting response, a joyful curiosity, an inner respect for others, an open and

hones heart, go hand in hand with aquiring new skills and new knowledge, little by little, of the wide world and its people. (Clement, J., 1975, p46).

By this time many of the kindergarteners will have one or more younger broters or sisters. They will begin to take some responsibility for these siblings, as their older brothers and sisters ~~have~~ done with them. There is a feeling of belonging, of moving forward, of regard for one another. (Clement, J., 1975).

"Before the more serious business of school begins these two years of kindergarten are a time (which can neither be hurried or prolonged) of free and spontaneous play gradually channeled into disciplined work. Reading readiness, number concepts, handwriting patterns, are introduced during the summer before the first grade begins. (Clement, J., 1975, p46)

During those two years there is still much outdoor activity. Fieldtrips will be taken into the woods or off the community's land. On these occasions brothers (often parents of the children) will assist in driving and working with the children.

The School Years (First Through Fourth Grade)

"Entering the first grade is a big event in the lives of our children. The whole community - from babies to grandparents - celebrate the occasion with them. One of the unique joys of being children in community is this chance to feel that so many participate in the special events of your life and that you in turn can share the joys and sorrows of so large a family." (Potts, M., 1975, p78)

"The daily lives of our primary school children follow a regular pattern: school from 8:00 to 12:30 every weekday morning, then home for rest and snack-time, and school again from 3:00 to 5:00. During the school year this means academic work in the morning

and crafts, games, music, or projects in the afternoon. In the summer both mornings and afternoons are spent working, swimming, hiking, singing or playing together..."(Potts, 1975, p78).

"Ofcourse the daily lives of our children are also filled with the ups and downs of their struggles to live and learn and grow together - struggles against selfishness, argueing, meanness, disobediance, disrespect for others, and struggle for a joyful, harmonious, childlike working together.(Potts, M., 1975)

Several directions that began in the earlier years continue through school. Some are expanded; others narrowed or crystallized. These include involvement in the ongoing life of the total community, integration of many subject areas, learning competency in basic skills, learning practical skills outside the classroom, learning to be selfless, loving and having 'a freedom from possessions and selfwill' and love of nature and the Spirit.

Involvement in the Community.

"In the community the area of the child's activities as he grows up is the same as that of his future life. He helps in the community farm (now garden) and workshops; he experiences the contact the Church has with the world, and its living, fighting participation in the needs and concerns of the whole world."(Arnold, E., 1976, p34).

All school children attend the communal midday meal (where something is read especially for them). The older children (6 grade up) also attend the evening meal (where serious books are read and reports given). School classes take on projects - like participation in the garden - and at about 4th grade the school child spends one afternoon a week in a department of the community - shop, children's house, kitchen, garden etc.

And the children continue to provide entertainment at celebrations, festivals and meals. Most of the children learn an instrument early on, and participate in the school orchestra. The school choir, drama groups and dance groups also perform. Often individual grades will present something at a celebration that they have worked on at school. Art and craft projects are directed towards the community - to put in the dining room or hallways, to use in guest rooms, or for the housemothers to give as presents at Christmas or birthdays.

Whole families will also become involved in community projects. These run from looking after the family garden to getting up at 6am to help pick the pea harvest.

This involvement in the total life of the community both educates the individual child in areas of vocational skills, work attitudes and responsible involvement in the survival processes, and 'teaches' the child the religious values, rituals, forms and ceremonies. It is very similiar to what Bruner talks about in 'primitive' societies, where systems are transmitted nonverbally from one generation to another. (Bruner, et al; 1968).

Integration of Subject Matter.

"In play and craftwork, the young child naturally begins to shape matter and give it artistic form, guided by his creative instinct. For this reason craftwork plays an important role in our educational community. The brothers and sisters who do handicrafts and work projects with the children are just as important to our school as the teachers who have the task of awakening the child's mind and spirit in the direction of academic work." (Arnold, E., 1976, p34).

"Teachers should immerse themselves in the subject matter in such a way that the Spirit of faith, love, unity, peace, social justice, and brotherliness sheds light not only on history and liturature, but, bold as it may sound, on all subjects as well." (Arnold, E., 1976, p35)

What matters most is the process, not the subject matter. The process - which includes the educator and those who are educated - must be infused with the values and attitudes of the community.

Play also becomes an important part of the child's school life. As Dwight Blough says, "To see and experience children of all ages freeley and completely enjoying the out-of-doors in play, study and work is a great thrill and a deep challenge....I must say that play is a very important part of the lives of our children."(1975, p106)

Selflessness, Service and Social Awareness.

"It (selfishness) contradicts the child's enthusiasm, which itself is his unselfish devotion to others and his natural feeling for justice." (Arnold, E., 1976, p5)

It must be remembered here that the founders of the community (and the current membership) want to educate their children in academic and skill areas, in the religious values and symbols of the community, and in a sense of social awareness and concern that originally created the Bruderhof. This is very difficult to do (some claim impossible). The Amish and Hutterites feel that education is anti-religious, and therefore educate their children only through the eighth grade. Many people (~~Phillip Hazelton~~) argue that one cannot develop an awareness of social inequality and hatred in children who grow up in an equal society.

So an effort is made to integrate this social awareness and sensitivity into the child's school life. E. Arnold says, "It is not true that children have no feeling for the suffering of man, for the injustice and social guilt of our world ...even these children have a longing for the life of a street urchin, for the

friendship with poor children."(1976, p30)

"Therefore, such a strong spirit of love must be fostered among the children that all lack of feeling, all coldheartedness, all hatefulness and hurting of others are out of the question, even when children have gone beyond the stage of innocence."(Arnold, E., 1976, p25)

Contact with the Greater Community.

As the child gets older his forays into the community around him become longer and more sophisticated. Just as kindergarteners would have a picnic in the community owned woods, the children in the first four grades take trips to neaby points of interest(outside the community) and also futher afield. In Pennsylvania, where my parents teach, they go to Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., visit the Amish and Pennsylvania Dutch. (Wardle, 1974). Barge trips down local rivers, train rides over the Appalachian Mountains, visits to blast furnaces and down coal mine shafts are all part of the child's education outside of the classroom. When we lived in England my father delighted in taking the children to the Bournville factory (chocolate) and the Houses of Parliament.

Community resources, such as buses, money, etc., are used by the children when they go on innumerable fieldtrips....Extra people are used by the school when it is considered necessary (Wardle, 1974)

Trips during the summer take on more of a recreational nature-swimming, picking blueberries, hiking the Appalachian Trail etc.

Materials, Books, Packaged Materials Used in the Community School.

As with any other school situation the content of the classes and books changes over time according to perceived deficiences.

These changes come about for any number of reasons, including feedback from the local high school (students attend the local public school beyond eighth grade), poor results on national tests (Iowa Basic Skills), changes nationally, such as the move to metrics, and perceived inconsistencies between the community, the community's philosophy of education, and the materials.

Following is a discussion of some of the materials currently being used at the fourth grade level. Some of the programs are used throughout the school. This information is from private correspondence of Derek Wardle (the author's father)(February 10, 1979), who is currently a teacher at the Pennsylvania community. He has been involved in community education (teacher and principal, England and America) for 30 years.

Math: Mathematics in Our World, by Eicholz, Daffer and Fleenor; published by Addison-Wesley. (1978). This series is used throughout the school - from preschool to 8th grade. It is fairly traditional in approach, and teaches metrics as the basic measurement unit, and uses Cuisenaire rods. This program was selected after unsuccessful attempts at using a 'modern math' approach.

Spelling: Basic Goals in Spelling, by Kottmeyer and Claus; published by Webster(McGraw-Hill)(1976). This includes some hand writing and English grammer. It too is used for P through 8.

Reading: Ginn Basic Reader, 100 Edition, by Russel Clymer, Gates and McCullough. (1966). This series is used with workbooks from the same series, and is used for grades 4 through 6. First through 3rd grade use, New Basic Readers (Scott -Foresman, 1965) Both of these series are fairly traditional approaches, combining phonics and other methods.

English: Exploring in English by Hand, Harsh, Ney and Shane; published by Laidlaw, 1975. This program is used for 4th through 8th grade.

Social Studies: Our Big World, by Sorensen, Barrows, and Parker; published by Silver Burdett (1968). This is used in conjunction with workbooks for the same series, Contemporary Social Studies (Silver Burdett) and films, filmstrips, study prints, and guest teachers from the international membership of the community.

The above are the basic series of programs used. In addition to previously mentioned areas of education beyond these materials - fieldtrips, drama and choir groups, learning vocational skills in departments - it should be noted that the teachers use creative approaches to teach the basics. (Many are very experienced and bring ideas from various schools of thought, such as the Nuffield approach from England). D. Wardle writes about a wall newspaper his class (4th grade) worked on. It involved stories, book reports, poetry, art, articles on winter sports, children from other lands, community news etc. There was an editor and sectional editors, and the students worked on handwriting, punctuation, spelling, English, paragraphing and sentence structure as part of the process of completing the paper.

German is also taught to all students in the first eight grades. It is reinforced and elaborated by German songs sung by the entire community, by German plays and singing presentations given by the school children to the rest of the community. Some of the older members of the community still use German as their favorite conversational language.

Fourth Through Eighth Grade.

As the children grow older they take more responsibility in the community life. Their afternoon activities are more work-like; their involvement in departments is more realistic. School work demands more skill and persistence, but otherwise is a continuation of the previous years. Math, science, language, arts and crafts are all important aspects of the curriculum at this age.

Teachers in the Community School

Most of the regular teachers in the community school have formal training in teacher education - from England, Germany or America. Almost none are certified in the state where they teach, and often teach in areas in which they might not be specifically trained. Woodwork, musical instruments, dance, choir, art and other specific areas are usually taught by skilled individuals who leave the regular workforce of the community and enter the school just to teach those specific areas. There is usually a good mix of old experienced teachers and new enthusiastic recently graduated ones in each school. All teachers are members of the community in which they teach.

High school (9th to 12th grade)

The students attend the local junior and senior high school for their instruction, but their life at the community changes little. When they return in the afternoon they work in various departments and are reabsorbed into communal life. The high school students also spend time together as a group - preparing singing, drama and other projects for the rest of the community, or enjoying hiking, swimming etc.

Weekends see the high school student working Saturdays, spending time with their families Sundays, and maybe helping a specific family,

old person or project. Responsibilities at home, on the job and in other areas have increased considerably.

There is almost no interaction between the highschool students from the community and those from outside the community - other than during class (where the two groups usually have opposing viewpoints).

College.

One of the concepts of the Society of Brothers is the idea that everyone who joins - including people who grew up in the community - must make a conscious decision to live in community (the joining procedure involves baptism). It is felt that this decision cannot be made in a vacuum. The individual must have some concept about life outside the community, and he must be able to survive if he decides to leave the community. So all children who grow up in the community are expected to learn a specific skill or profession after they finish highschool. Some attend a four-year college, others take technical training, still others pursue an apprenticeship of some sort. Very occasionally an individual will attend school for more than four years - say in the case of a doctor or dentist.

The community pays for this futher education, once scholarship and work-study opportunities have been exhausted. (within limits)

How Good is the Early Education of Communities of the Society of Brothers?

At the onset of this paper I pointed out that, 1) I wished to look at the 0 - 8 year olds in the community, and, 2) it is impossible to separate out the formal instruction and child care from the total community environment. Both these factors must be considered

when we attempt to look at the quality of education in the community. A third factor that must be considered is the area of moral education. There is also the basic question that needs to be answered - for what are we educating? - before we can really decide how good the education is.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

This test has been given periodically to the children at the school in Pennsylvania. The children scored low in Math and the English section on Comprehension. (Wardle, D., 1979) The math scores were low because at that time the school was teaching a modern math program; the test evaluated traditional math. "I believe they would score much higher now." (Wardle, D., 1979, p2). The English Comprehension scores might well be due to a cultural difference (see Highschool Satisfaction).

Highschool Satisfaction.

"We get comments from the highschool that the students are well prepared in the ability to read, write, measure and study."(Wardle, D., 1979, p2)

> Ofcourse they lack 'knowledge' about sports champions, or TV stars, and their vocabulary is limited in such fields; but we regard (these) as at least non-essentials, if not detrimental to a child's development. (Wardle, D., 1979, p2).

It was felt that more was needed in the way of science, and this has been improved in the last years - especially for the 7th and 8th grades. (Wardle, 1979).

College Graduation.

A very high percentage of community students graduate from a college, training center or apprenticeship program (almost all enter such a program). For example everyone who graduated with this author

from highschool (1966) successfully completed post highschool education; and all six children in his family completed training - the least 2 years, the most 6 years.

Very few community students study more than four years beyond highschool.

For What are the Community Children Educated?

A high percentage of children who grow up in the Bruderhof choose to join after they complete their post highschool training. They enter the adult life of community members fully prepared with vocational skills, a solid education and a profession suitable for service in the community. They are also well versed and acculturated to the religious values and symbols of the Bruderhof, and the social consciousness and sensitivity of a society that chooses to be on the side of the downtrodden, the weak and the forgotton.

But what happens to those who choose to leave ? "Ofcourse, for those who have grown up in the community and then left, there is the problem of adapting to a different society." (Wardle, 1974, p365)

Training the student pursues after highschool is chosen based on skills that are useful in the community - teaching, nursing, early childhood education and printing (they publish books). Law, architecture, writing, photography, etc. are not professions that community children contemplate pursuing. Obviously this is no problem if they return to the community; it is only one of many problems if someone decides to leave the community.

Cultural change, aculturation and the process of selecting, rejecting and sorting values, styles, beliefs and activities one wishes to keep and reject when one leaves one culture and moves into another are clearly the subject of other papers.

References

Annis, L.F. The Child Before Birth. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Arnold, E. Children's Education in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1976.

Arnold, E. Why We Live in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1927 (original) and 1976.

Arnold, H. & Arnold, A. Living in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1974

Bettelheim, B. Children of the Dream. New York: Avon, 1971

Blough, D. Work And Play With Children. In: Society of Brothers, (Eds.) Children in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1975, 106 - 112

Bronfenbrenner, U. Two Worlds of Childhood. New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1970.

Clement, J. Kindergarten Years. In: Society of Brothers, (Eds.) Children in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1975, 45 - 46

Potts, M. Primary School. In: Society of Brothers,(Eds.) Children in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1975, 66 - 68

Shirky, L. & Zimmerman, S. Our Youngest. In: Society of Brothers, (Eds.)Children in Community. Rifton, New York: Plough, 1975, 45 - 46

Wardle, D. Personal Communication to Author. Farmington, Pa. 1979

Wardle, F. Early Childhood Programs in Bruderhof Communities. Journal of the Child Welfare League, 1974, LIII, 6, 360 - 365

Wardle, F. Children in the Communities of the Society of Brothers, & Education in Communities of the Society of Brothers. New Schools Exchange, 20, 32- 36

Wardle, F. My First Half. Kansas City: Unpublished autobiography. 1979